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AUTHOR Waterman, Jill; Walker, Elizabeth
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ABSTRACT

Aimed at helping the most vulnerable young adolescents, this book attempts to provide tools and techniques for practitioners working with youth at risk for academic, behavioral, and emotional difficulties resulting from such factors as difficult family situations, learning problems, or socioeconomic disadvantage. The SPARK curriculum combines a group process model aimed at developing interpersonal skills with a psychoeducational model focusing on building competencies by developing specific skills needed by youth. It offers a step-by-step methodology for improving the ability of at-risk students to understand their feelings and change their maladaptive behavior. The SPARK curriculum has seven modules that address the following issues: (1) trust building; (2) anger management; (3) ethnic identity; (4) educational aspiration; (5) peer pressure; (6) exposure to violence; and (7) family relationships. Chapter 1 presents the guidelines for setting up and leading groups. Chapter 2 discusses each of the seven modules of the SPARK Curriculum. Chapter 3 discusses the effectiveness of SPARK Groups. Appendixes A through K contain material and handouts in English and Spanish. (Contains 4 figures and 12 references.) (JDM)

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